

For Immediate Release
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WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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Budget Chairs' Statement on UW-System and UW-Madison Chancellor

MADISON - The co-chairs of the state's budget-writing Joint Committee on Finance, State Senator Alberta Darling (R-River Hills) and State Representative John Nygren (R-Marinette), issued the following statement regarding the UW System's proposed cuts, increased autonomy, and UW-Madison Chancellor Blank:

"Wisconsin is home to a world class university system, and as elected officials, it's our duty to give these institutions the tools necessary to succeed. The University of Wisconsin has stressed the need for autonomy for years. Governor Walker is offering autonomy and more flexibility in his budget proposal and instead of support, the governor and legislature are being met with divisive politics.

Two budgets ago, Governor Walker proposed to give UW-Madison increased autonomy by moving the institution from the UW System to a public authority. Then UW-Madison Chancellor Biddy Martin [supported this proposal](#), even with the prospect of a \$125 million cut to the flagship campus. Chancellor Martin publicly praised the proposal and said that it would give UW-Madison the opportunity to enhance its quality over time.

"Today's budget proposal is similar to that of the 2011-13 budget with one major difference - the autonomy and prospective \$300 million cut would be spread between campuses in the entire UW System. This may mean a lesser cut for the UW-System's flagship campus and more autonomy than what was proposed in 2011 - the proposal lauded by Chancellor Martin.

"Recently, UW-Madison's existing Chancellor Rebecca Blank has said that the current proposal would have a negative impact on the UW-Madison campus - a stark contrast from former Chancellor Martin's message.

This difference begs the question: Is the current chancellor and former Obama appointee playing politics with our state's universities?

"We need to make decisions based on what's best for Wisconsin students, and we believe that giving the UW System more autonomy will achieve that goal. In the future, we hope to have an open and honest dialogue with the System about the budget, as no constructive conversation will come from bringing Washington politics to Madison."

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